

SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

'They're not welcome here in Albuquerque': Sunport protest targets deportation contractor

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Brian McQuaid, a founder of Dare to Struggle New Mexico, speaks out against CSI Aviation's offices in Albuquerque to a group of activists during a protest Saturday near the Sunport. The company, headquartered in Texas, has been a primary federal contractor for immigration deportation flights and has a \$500 million-plus contract with feds for removal operations.

Nathan Burton/The New Mexican

Takeaways

- CSI Aviation has raked in over \$800 million from the Trump administration and holds a \$1.5 billion contract to coordinate immigration detainee transport and deportation flights — flights criticized for inhumane conditions including full-body restraints and limited medical care.
- Activists from Dare to Struggle NM argue local officials' pro-immigrant rhetoric rings hollow while CSI operates freely out of the Albuquerque's airport. The group was blocked by Albuquerque police from reaching the facility CSI facility Saturday, instead relegated to a nearby parking lot in view of officers.
- Protesters also decried CEO and Founder Alan Weh, who had run for political office in New Mexico and has deep ties to President Donald Trump. His family donated roughly \$840,000 to pro-Trump PACs, his daughter was involved in an effort to decertify New Mexico's 2020 election results and Trump's campaign paid CSI to host a rally at its Albuquerque hangar in 2024.

ALBUQUERQUE — A police roadblock stopped an activist group at the Albuquerque International Sunport on Saturday, barring them from reaching their intended rallying point: the local base of CSI Aviation, the primary federal contractor subcontracting immigration deportation and detainee transport flights.

But for the protesters, decrying how local officials had been complicit in allowing the company to locally operate, the police were a useful prop.

"We have [Albuquerque Mayor] Tim Keller's police department currently protecting the biggest deporter of immigrants in this country," said Lizzie Nutig, 27, a founding member of Dare to Struggle New Mexico. "We're just trying to go confront these guys. We want to let them know they're not welcome here in Albuquerque."



An Albuquerque police officer patrols near the CSI Aviation offices during a protest against the federal flight contractor conducting immigration deportations Saturday, May 30, 2026, near the Sunport.

Nathan Burton/The New Mexican



Joey Lopez, right, listens to Dare to Struggle member Nigel Brown speak during a protest in Albuquerque on Saturday.

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Activists chant in protest against CSI Aviation in Albuquerque on Saturday, May 30, 2026. The company, headquartered in Texas, has been a primary federal contractor for immigration deportation flights.

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